

Community resources

[Follow us on Twitter](#) [Check our Reddit](#) [Twitter this](#) [Digg this page](#) [Contact us on IRC](#)

courage is contagious

Viewing cable 07LIMA3271, HUGO CHAVEZ, OLLANTA HUMALA AND THE TUNA CAN

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#07LIMA3271**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
07LIMA3271	2007-09-28 12:09	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL//NOFORN	Embassy Lima

Appears in these articles:
[elcomercio.pe](#)

VZCZCXYZ0013
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHPE #3271/01 2711209
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 281209Z SEP 07
FM AMEMBASSY LIMA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6984
INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION PRIORITY 1811
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY 5120
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 7602
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES PRIORITY 3105
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 0812
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ SEP 4537
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO PRIORITY 9316
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY 1478
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO PRIORITY 1510
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUMIAAA/USCINCSO MIAMI FL PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 003271

SIPDIS

NOFORN
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/27/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [PE](#)

SUBJECT: HUGO CHAVEZ, OLLANTA HUMALA AND THE TUNA CAN
CONTROVERSY

REF: LIMA 02957

Classified By: Political Counselor ...

id: 123940

date: 9/28/2007 12:09

refid: 07LIMA3271

origin: Embassy Lima

classification: CONFIDENTIAL//NOFORN

destination: 07LIMA2957

header:

VZCZCXYZ0013

PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHPE #3271/01 2711209

ZNY CCCCC ZZH

P 281209Z SEP 07

FM AMEMBASSY LIMA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6984

INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION PRIORITY 1811

RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY 5120

RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 7602

RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES PRIORITY 3105

RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 0812

RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ SEP 4537

RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO PRIORITY 9316

RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY 1478

RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO PRIORITY 1510

RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

RUMIAAA/USCINCSO MIAMI FL PRIORITY

----- header ends -----

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 003271

SIPDIS

NOFORN

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/27/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [PE](#)

SUBJECT: HUGO CHAVEZ, OLLANTA HUMALA AND THE TUNA CAN
CONTROVERSY

REF: LIMA 02957

Classified By: Political Counselor Alexis Ludwig for reasons 1.4(d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Following press reports that tuna cans labeled with pictures of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and nationalist leader (PNP) Ollanta Humala were being distributed in towns devastated by the August 15 earthquake, the public response was severe: Chavez and Humala were seeking to profit from tragedy (Ref). The cans then vanished from public view, and speculation grew that they must have been media fabrications or that Humala's supporters had scrambled to destroy the evidence. Recently, however, a close contact in Congress gave two sample cans to poloff and claimed they were a hoax instigated by Ollanta's jailed brother Antauro Humala designed to smear Ollanta's name. Whatever the case, the tuna can controversy highlights continuing intrigue amid Peru's political opposition. End Summary.

ALBA-core Tuna

¶2. (SBU) A week after the August 15 earthquake in southern Peru, the conservative tabloid El Expreso reported that Ollanta Humala supporters in the outskirts of Pisco and Ica had delivered thousands of tuna cans labeled with photos of Humala and Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez. A media

firestorm ensued, criticizing the cans as a gross attempt to profit politically from a humanitarian tragedy. After the El Expreso report, photos of the cans appeared in a handful of media reports, but otherwise they vanished.

¶3. (SBU) The vanishing cans led to speculation that they never actually existed, except perhaps in doctored photos, or that Humala's Nationalist Party supporters had quickly destroyed all evidence. El Expreso later reported that tuna cans with the labels removed had appeared near Pisco as Humalistas scrambled to contain the public relations damage. Some GOP contacts reported hearing that Humala supporters had shredded all leftover labels. Both Humala and Chavez government officials sought to distance themselves from the scandal with denials and counter-accusations that either the US or Peruvian government was involved.

The Cans Re-Discovered

¶4. (C) Recently, however, a close Embassy contact gave Poloff two sample tuna cans, proving, at the very least, that they exist. The can labels, identical to those published in the media, read: "In the Face of Looting, Roadblocks, Desperation, and Chaos; Solidarity with our Compatriots", and combine criticism of the government's response to the earthquake with praise for Humala and Chavez. The Embassy's tuna can source is independent Congressman Gustavo Espinoza, who was elected in 2006 under the PNP banner but then immediately broke his ties with Ollanta. Espinoza, a vocal critic of Ollanta's links to Venezuela, has since become a political operator for Ollanta's jailed brother and political rival Antauro Humala, even sponsoring legislation that sought to grant him amnesty.

An Humala Family Feud?

¶5. (C) Espinoza told us Antauro had produced the tuna cans in an effort to smear Ollanta's name. The two brothers have feuded publicly since Ollanta sought to distance himself from the more radical Antauro during the presidential campaign. In late 2006, Antauro publicly called Ollanta a "damned traitor" ("traidor de mierda"). One Antauro supporter told us that Antauro's 2005 armed rebellion against the central government had helped create Ollanta, "and now we will destroy him." A PNP Congressman publicly echoed the family feud theory, blaming the cans on "a congressman that used to belong to (Ollanta's) party and is now looking to discredit us."

Comment:

¶6. (C) Amidst the volley of accusations and counteraccusations, the discovery of the infamous tuna cans raises as many questions as it appears to answer. While it is possible that the cans reflect an imperfectly considered propaganda campaign on the part of Chavez and his friends in Peru, this would suggest a gang that can't shoot straight. The Antauro Humala "opposition within the opposition" theory, alternatively, would mean that a struggle for the outsider mantle, invaluable in Peru's political arena, is already underway. Whatever the case, the tuna can controversy highlights the intrigue or infighting in Peru's active anti-systemic camp. End Comment.
MCKINLEY

=====CABLE ENDS=====